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University degrees still on the rise: ABS

The number of Australians with a Bachelor degree or higher qualification continues to increase, according to results released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

In 2002, 18% of people aged 15 to 64 years had a Bachelor degree or higher qualification, compared with 10% in 1992.

Just under one-third (31%) of people with a Bachelor degree or higher qualification were aged 25 to 34 years, while 27% were aged between 35 and 44 years.

Despite the increase in degree holders, approximately 30% of people aged 15 to 64 years (including those still at school) reported Year 10 or below as their highest level of education and 20% reported Year 12. Approximately 15% of 15 to 64 year olds had a Certificate III or IV (higher level qualifications from the Vocational Education and Training sector) as their highest educational attainment.

People who held a Bachelor degree or higher qualification, or a Certificate III or IV were more likely to be employed (86% and 83% respectively) compared with people whose level of highest educational attainment was Year 12 or below (61%).

Of the 2,277,700 people aged 15 to 64 years studying for a qualification in 2002, 28% were studying for a Bachelor degree and 12% were studying for a Certificate III or IV. Almost half (45%) of Bachelor degree students were aged between 20 and 24 years, and 27% were aged between 15 and 19 years.

Management and commerce (19%) and society and culture (12%) were the most common fields of study among people studying for a qualification.

Further details are available in **Education and Work, Australia, May 2002** (cat. no. 6227.0).

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